

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 MANAGU 03061 281601Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 MCT-01 SY-05 TRSE-00 SCA-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /065 W

-----112994 281831Z /46

R 281513Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR QUOW

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3619

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

UNCLAS MANAGUA 3061

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, NU, ES

SUBJECT: SALVADORAN AMBASSADOR TO NICARAGUA ON CHURCH-STATE  
RELATIONS IN EL SALVADOR

1. THE SALVADORAN AMBASSADOR TO NICARAGUA, JUAN CONTRERAS CHAVEZ, STATED IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN THE SOMOZA FAMILY NEWSPAPER NOVEDADES ON JUNE 26 THAT THERE IS NO PERSECUTION AGAINST THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN EL SALVADOR, "BUT, RATHER, AGAINST AGITATORS AND VILLATORS OF THE LAW." ACCORDING TO THE AMBASSADOR, EL SALVADOR AND OTHER COUNTRIES ARE THE VICTIMS OF AN INTERNATIONAL PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN MOUNTED BY "INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM." HE SAID THAT SOME FOREIGN JESUIT PRIESTS HAD VIOLATED THE LAW, AND SINCE EL SALVADOR IS "A COUNTRY OF LAWS" (ESTADO DE DERECHO) THE AUTHORITIES HAD TO ENFORCE THEM WITHOUT EXCEPTIONS. CONTRERAS CITED PRESIDENT MOLINA'S STATEMENT THAT THERE WERE "CONCRETE PROOFS" THAT A NUMBER OF FOREIGN PRIESTS HAD ENGAGED IN UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES. "THE GOAL OF THE SUBVERSIVE GROUPS IS TO CONFRONT CHURCH AND STATE", THE AMBASSADOR SAID.

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2. COMMENT: THIS IS THE SECOND TIME IN THREE DAYS THAT NOVEDADES HAS PUBLISHED STATEMENTS BY SALVADORAN DIPLOMATS IN NICARAGUA. ON JUNE 24, IN AN INTERVIEW, THE FIRST SECRETARY OF THE EL SALVADOR EMBASSY DENIED THAT THERE WAS FRICTION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE IN EL SALVADOR. THE STATEMENTS APPEAR TO BE IN RESPONSE TO AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN SALVADOR PUBLISHED IN THE OPPOSITION NEWSPAPER LA PRENSA ON JUNE 16, WHICH DENOUNCES A

CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE CHURCH IN EL SALVADOR AND LISTS INSTANCES OF  
PROPAGANDA AND PHYSICAL ATTACKS AGAINST ECCLESIASTICAL INSTITUTIONS  
AND PERSONNEL.  
RUBENSTEIN

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009